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Letter dated 7 September 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement issued after the meeting of our Heads of State or Government on 7 September 2000 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

Wang **Yingfan**
Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations

Jean-David **Levitte**
Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

Sergey V. **Lavrov**
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

Jeremy **Greenstock**
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations

Richard C. **Holbrooke**
Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations

00-63590 (E) 110900

Annex to the letter dated 7 September 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement issued on 7 September 2000 by the Heads of State or Government of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council following their meeting

We, President Jiang Zemin of the People's Republic of China, President Jacques Chirac of the Republic of France, President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of the Russian Federation, Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and President William Jefferson Clinton of the United States of America have met in New York on 7 September 2000 and hereby state the following:

Mindful of the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council in regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, we share a solemn commitment to ensuring that the United Nations is stronger, more effective and more efficient than ever before as it enters the twenty-first century.

The challenges facing the United Nations and the world community are daunting. To meet such challenges, the world community's response must be quicker, more targeted, and better coordinated than ever before. As the world's only truly universal organization — in terms both of its mandate and its membership — the United Nations has an essential role in the twenty-first century.

The United Nations can only be as effective, as creative and as authoritative as its Members will it to be. Moving into the next century, the permanent members of the Security Council pledge, together with the entire membership, to strengthen the United Nations, ensure the authority of the Security Council and uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Bearing primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council, in particular its permanent members, has an abiding interest in ensuring that the United Nations is equipped to meet the challenges it faces. We therefore commit ourselves to strengthening the operational capabilities of the Security Council in this area. Only by strengthening our dedication to the purposes and principles of the Charter and by endowing the United Nations with the means to deliver on its many commitments can we fulfil our obligations to ensure that the United Nations can achieve its full potential.

To this end, we will focus our efforts on the following priority areas:

(a) Enhancing leadership for peace and security. The leadership role of the United Nations, particularly in maintaining international peace and security, must be strengthened to reflect the Organization's changing challenges and priorities. This evolution must take into account both the shifting face of the world community and the types of conflicts the United Nations must confront today. We commit ourselves to fostering a more transparent and broadly representative Security Council to enhance its effectiveness as the leading body in the field of international peace and security.

(b) Strengthening peacekeeping. The nature and number of international conflicts demanding United Nations involvement has shifted fundamentally over the past decade, a change that has yet to be reflected in structural reforms to equip the United Nations to fulfil the array of mandates it now faces. We pledge to move expeditiously to endow the United Nations with resources — both operational and financial — commensurate to the tasks it faces in its peacekeeping activities worldwide. Enhancing the United Nations peacekeeping capacity should strengthen the central role of the United Nations in conflict prevention and settlement. We look to the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Expert Panel on Peace Operations as an important element to be considered in order to ensure the effectiveness of the United Nations in this vital arena.

(c) Revitalizing management. The breadth, scope, and complexity of the activities of the United Nations demand effective leadership. We pledge to support steps to empower the Secretary-General with a mandate to modernize and streamline the Secretariat further, to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes, and to focus the Organization's resources on priority areas, while bringing closure to activities that no longer warrant continued investment.

(d) Replenishing human resources. The most valuable resource of the United Nations is its people. The skill, vision, and dedication of the United Nations Secretariat staff have made possible all that the United Nations has accomplished to date, and will determine the Organization's future. We pledge to support prompt steps to ensure that the United Nations base of human capital, particularly in the field of peacekeeping, can be fortified through a process that is transparent, equitable, and designed to attract the very best talent available from all corners of the world.

(e) Reaffirming financial commitment. As enshrined in the Charter, the United Nations financial base must accurately reflect the capabilities and responsibilities of every Member State. We pledge to support measures to broaden the resource base for this institution through financial structures that are equitable, transparent and reflective of current realities for the regular budget and the peacekeeping budget, and the financing of United Nations activities. We recognize the need to adjust the existing peacekeeping scale of assessments, which is based on the 1973 system, in the light of changed circumstances, including countries' current capacity to pay. Taking into account our special responsibilities as permanent members of the Security Council and the duty of all Member States to meet their financial obligations to the United Nations, we commit ourselves to creating a more stable and equitable financial foundation for current and future United Nations operations, including adjustments to the peacekeeping scale of assessment to reflect the role of all Member States and especially the role of all permanent members in peacekeeping financing.

In each of these areas we pledge to work together in the coming months and years to ensure that the United Nations is imbued with the resources, the vision, and the support it needs. As permanent members of the Security Council, we will continue to fulfil our obligations under the Charter and commit ourselves to making the Organization stronger and more effective. To that end, we agree to have more regular exchanges of views on important international issues at all levels.

We express our appreciation and support for the Secretary-General for the role he plays in the service of peace, development and strengthening the United Nations.

As we move into the next century, we pledge to work with the entire United Nations membership to bridge differences and agree on new measures to build on the promise of the United Nations first 55 years.